

THE RIVER RUNS DRY

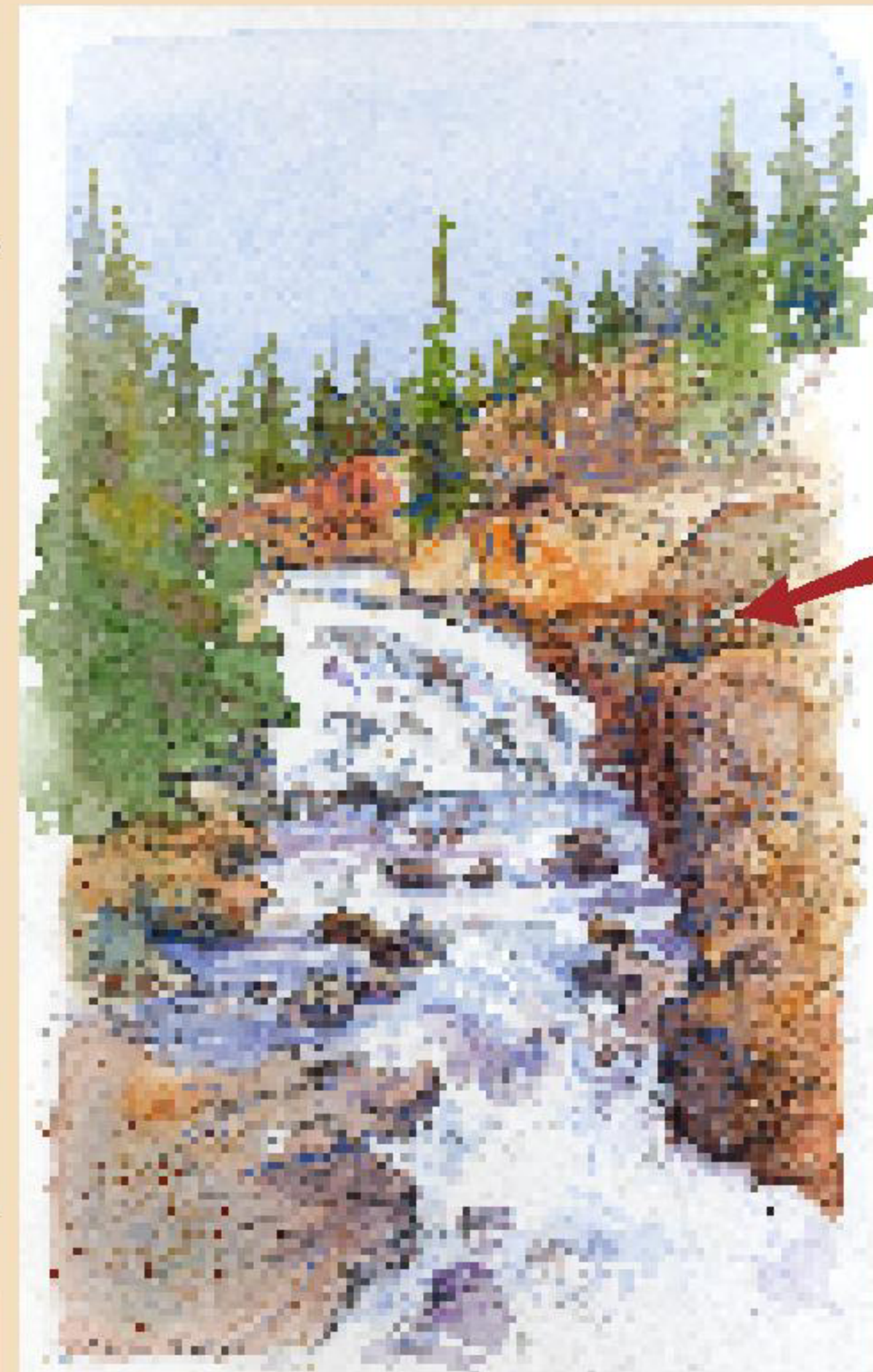


The remains of a concrete and wood low-head dam. The dam impounded water, raised the level of the river, and diverted the water into a wooden flume.

Today the water of the Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone River plunges over this waterfall, but it did not always. Imagine this same waterfall with virtually no water.

From 1916 through 1925, The Western Smelting and Power Company diverted nearly the entire volume of water from the Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone River into a nearby wooden flume to generate electricity for their mining operations on Henderson Mountain.

About 1/4-mile upstream of this waterfall, a low-head concrete dam on the Clark's Fork impounded and diverted nearly all of the water into a wooden flume. At times, the water was routed around this waterfall and used to turn turbines in the hydro electric power plant before returning to its natural course downstream.



History Mystery:
Do you see the rock retainer wall at the top, right side of the waterfall? Do you have any idea as to the purpose of this wall? Although thoroughly investigated, historians do not know why it was built, nor the purpose of this structure. What do you think?

Over the years the powerful Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone River has reclaimed much of its original water course. Torrential spring runoff breached the concrete low-head dam returning much of the water to its former channel.

An automobile follows the power line near Cooke City.